



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

T -80- 04

For Immediate Release
December 16, 2004

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Owners of Antique Metal Finishing Charged with Toxic Dumping

Los Angeles --- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) announced a 23 count misdemeanor complaint (#04LM09942) was filed on December 16, 2004 by the Long Beach City Attorney's office against the owners of Antique Metal Finishing (AMF) for crimes related to the illegal disposal, storage, transportation, and treatment of hazardous waste. Those charged are Constance "Connie" Pushckor, age 61; Joseph Francis Pushckor, age 65; and Richard Allen Pushckor, age 43.

Criminal investigators with DTSC conducted an investigation of AMF after receiving notification that the family run metal plating business, located at 1201 Newport Avenue in Long Beach, has been operating at its current location for over 25 years and had not produced any hazardous waste manifests, other than for recyclable silver waste. In 2003, AMF filed a Hazardous Materials and Business Plan with the Long Beach Fire Department in which it denied generating hazardous waste.

During the course of the investigation, DTSC investigators found hazardous waste in AMF's trash dumpster on four consecutive occasions. On one occasion, approximately 40 square feet of suspected hazardous waste and hazardous waste contaminated materials were discovered.

On May 26, 2004, DTSC executed a search warrant on AMF. During the course of the search, DTSC found that AMF generated hazardous waste from numerous sources. Hazardous waste was also found on the roof of the facility. The complaint alleges that AMF was illegally treating and disposing of hazardous waste. Testing showed that hazardous waste found on a neighboring property was consistent with the hazardous waste found at AMF. The complaint alleges that AMF was the source of this contamination.

The complaint alleges that hazardous waste contaminated with antimony, cadmium, copper, lead, nickel, silver, and/or zinc were illegally disposed to the trash bin. All of these heavy metals are hazardous and are known toxins. The trash bin used by AMF was picked up on a weekly basis by Long Beach Environmental Service Branch-Refuse Collection/Street Sweeping Division. The trash was managed as routine household (non-hazardous) waste. The waste was routed to the City of Long Beach's Southeast Resource Recovery Facility (SERRF). SERRF is an energy recovery plant which incinerates waste to produce energy.

"Disposing of hazardous waste in regular garbage bins is a serious violation of the hazardous waste laws. It is an unconscionable action that endangers public health and the environment", said Mary Locke, Chief of DTSC's Criminal Investigations Branch.

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This investigation was a cooperative effort between DTSC's Criminal Investigations Branch and Statewide Compliance Division, the Long Beach City Fire Department, the Long Beach Environmental Services Bureau, the Division of Hazardous Materials-Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County.

DTSC regulates the generation, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous waste within the State of California and ensures compliance with the Hazardous Waste Control Laws through regulations, inspections, and criminal investigations.

Businesses that generate hazardous waste must properly store, treat, and/or dispose of their hazardous waste. Generally, a registered Hazardous Waste Transporter and California Uniform Hazardous Waste manifest must be used when shipping hazardous waste off site for proper disposal. The use of the California Uniform Hazardous Waste manifest allows DTSC and the generator of the hazardous waste to track the shipment to ensure that hazardous waste has been disposed of properly. Through proper handling of hazardous waste, threats to public health and the degradation of the environment can be avoided.

To find out more information concerning the legal disposal of hazardous waste, to locate a registered hazardous waste transporter, or to find additional information about DTSC, please visit DTSC's web site at www.dtsc.ca.gov. For complaints involving the illegal dumping, storage, or transportation of hazardous waste, please call 1-800-69-TOXIC.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.